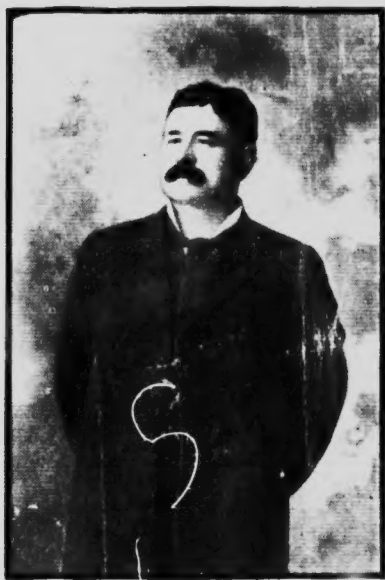


SHORT STORIES
OF
Vessel Days on The Great Lakes

BE LAND AND WATER

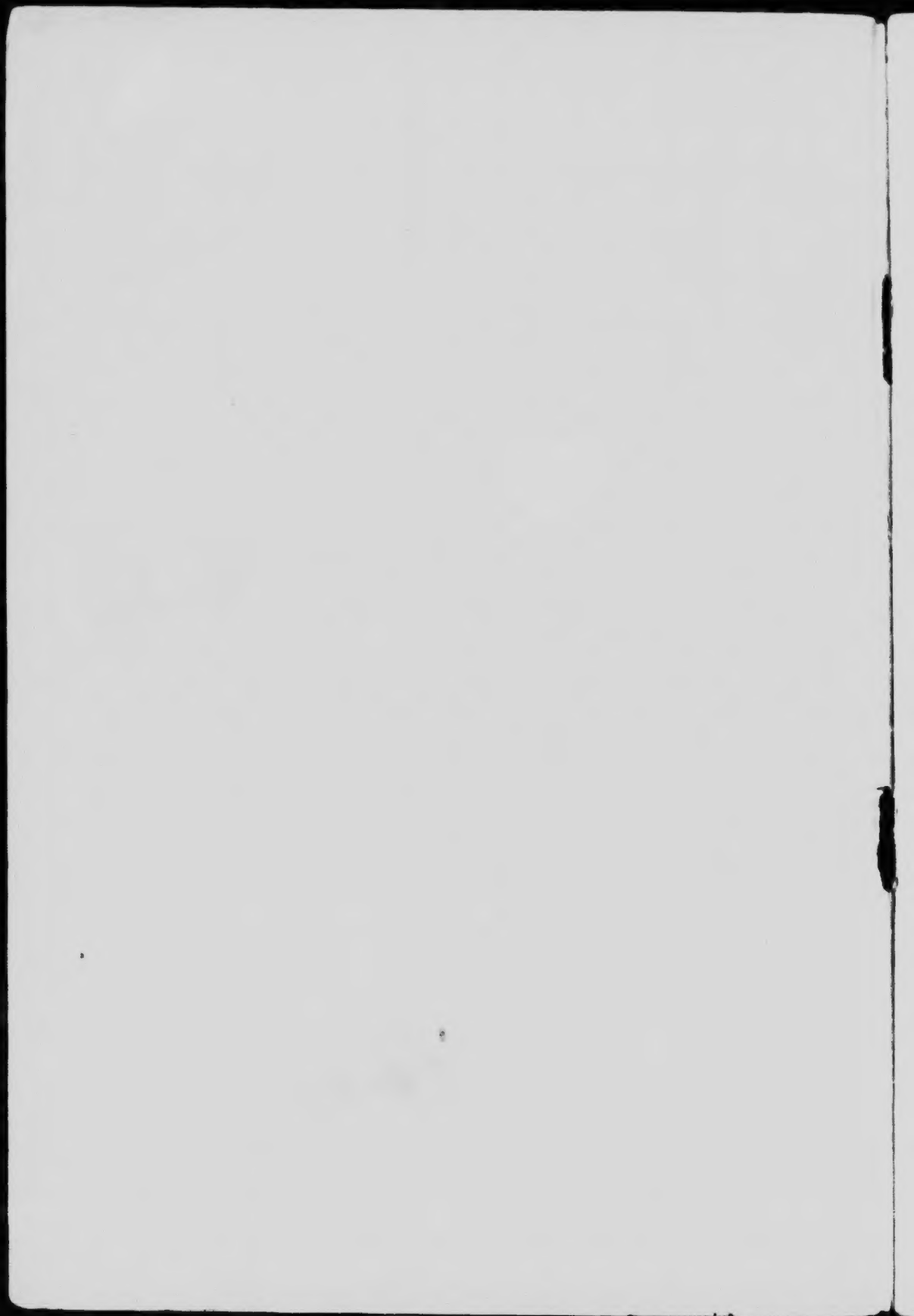


CAPT. JIM. McNABB.

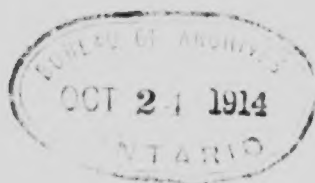
By CAPT. JIM. McNABB.



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1667



PREFACE.

Having been repeatedly and urgently requested by my sailor friends and others to place before them for perusal my early experiences and adventures of early days of lake navigation, is my justification for putting these adventures in print. Otherwise, as its title is clear, this book would require no preface. However, it may here be stated that those who may be attracted by the title of this work may rest assured that it contains nothing but the truth, including many historical facts, with a minute description of that hazardous and tiresome voyage during the expedition from Port Arthur to Fort Garry, when I went out as a voyageur and master of Colonel Wolseley's boat to help stay the hand of that notorious Riel and his associates in the Rebellion of 1870.

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SHORT STORIES OF VESSEL DAYS — ON — THE GREAT LAKES

RE LAND AND WATER

BY CAPTAIN JIM McNABB

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CHAPTER I.

My father, Alexander McNabb, was one of the oldest of the forties who plied the upper lakes, and at that time, when the stoves were on the lakes, and when they had to trust to charts and lead line alone. I was born on the shore of Georgian Bay and commenced sailing when but ten years old on vessels of my father's, and others. From that time until the present day, I thoroughly understood the workings of the vessels, and, to use a sailor's phrase, "worked from the knight's to the taffil rail."

At this early period I witnessed the introduction of the saw mill industry adjacent to the shores of the Georgian Bay and Lake Huron. The small vessels that traded on the lakes in those days were the only ones by which those saw mills got their supplies and shipped out their lumber.

The shores and woods along the lakes at this time were infested with wild animals and rattlesnakes of the most deadly kind, and in one particular case the vessel I was on, captained by Thomas Ganley, a sturdy mariner of those times, was carrying on her deck a smelting stack and machinery for the Musquash Mills. When we arrived at Musquash, we had to tie the vessel to the bank of the Musquash River, as there were no docks of any kind, and where the vessel was tied was a barren stretch of

land reaching out to where the mill was erected. It might here be stated that the mill-owners, before chartering us had given us to understand that they would help unload the machinery. After waiting for twelve hours for help, we caught sight of a lone Frenchman rowing down the river, who informed us that the portage from the vessel to the mill was literally alive with rattlesnakes, and that under those circumstances the men would not come to unload. However, after a few hours more they came down in a large scow and managed to get us unloaded.

To destroy the snakes, the company put forty hogs on that peninsula; these hogs would feed upon these snakes, which proved to be very fattening food. It was a common occurrence to see a large hog walking along with half a dozen snakes attached to his hams. The timbermen who had the pleasure of eating this pork, said they never ate better or fatter meat, and this incident gave rise to the common expression among the timbermen and sailors, "Rattle-snake pork."

After leaving Musquash, we came to anchor under the Giant's Tomb, the Spirit Island of Indian legend, and before raising our anchor, we saw the apparition which frightened so many Indians and white men from that island. It appears that years ago, when the square timber industry was at its best, a large timber company put on this island one hundred horses for summer pasturage, and on removing those animals from the island, there was one old stallion they could not catch. Being years alone on the island, he went back into the wild state, and the hair grew a foot long on his body, which gave him the appearance of something terrible. This horse making his appearance on the island at times was the apparition spoken of, and in his old age was supposed to have been devoured by wolves.

Leaving Giant's Tomb, we headed for Cove Island, being informed by a captain who was on another vessel and who was heading for Cove Island also, that a schooner laden with whiskey had gone to pieces on the rocks. When we arrived, we found the vessel's hull a complete wreck, while the cargo scattered on the shore was being picked up by the smaller vessels that gathered around, and taken away to be sold to the hotels at different ports on the Georgian Bay. This stocked the hotel bars for some time. In one instance there were six vessels in Owen Sound harbor in one night, and each had from one to two barrels of whiskey in its hold. Being pompous Highland Scotch captains who sailed those small vessels, they employed Highland pipers for each of the holds and kept the music going every night for a week, or until such time as the whiskey ran out or was sold.

CHAPTER II.

These were the days of mighty John McDuff, one of the strongest men on the lakes. This man on a bet carried a two hundred and eighty pound barrel of salt under his arm for a mile. McDuff was slightly deaf, very sensitive to the people talking around him and as at times he was inclined to be quarrelsome, his crew was generally afraid of him. In the early days of the Bruce Mines this Captain McDuff came to that port with his vessel, and for some reason that cannot be explained, the Bruce Mines Copper Co. had about three hundred tons of scrap iron piled upon their dock; everything from a needle to an anchor was in that scrap pile. In the pile there was a little cannon about three feet long, rusty and dilapidated. McDuff, seeing this, shouldered it and carried it aboard the vessel to the amazement of the sailors. He then took a bucket, filled it with old nuts, and carried them aboard. He next went up to Marks Bros., merchants at the time, bought ten pounds of powder and brought it aboard to the utter consternation of the crew, for they knew that the barrel in the hold was yet about half full. I was cabin boy, and McDuff, with a roar like a lion, gave me instructions not to burn that powder as he wanted it for other purposes.

We were loading a cargo of salt fish and shingles, for Lewis Smith, of Owen Sound, a trader, and when we got them aboard, we left for Owen Sound Bay. A dock in the bay called Boyd's wharf could be seen with an old warehouse thereon, and towards this warehouse the vessel was heading with the canvas just flapping in a very light breeze from the West.

It was about four o'clock in the morning, and the sun was just making its appearance in the east, with hardly a breath of air. It was here that something was going to happen; the crew began to totter on their pins, when they saw the big, lion-throated captain McDuff walk forward with the cannon under his arm to be lashed solidly to the Sampson post. He then got his powder, put it in the cannon, and taking an old coat for a wad, rammed it home with a windlass bar. He likewise rammed in the paillful of old nuts. When about one hundred yards from the old warehouse, he sang out to the man at the wheel to head her for the warehouse, and at that moment he touched the cannon off with a match. The report of that cannon woke up the inhabitants for miles around, and nothing remained of the warehouse but the posts. It, however, turned out to be a very expensive shot for the owner of the schooner and others concerned.

After this incident, I thought it expedient to leave the schooner Emily and I shipped on the schooner Stanley as cabin boy, with one of my

uncles. She being a larger vessel, and her discipline very strict, I did not care to remain on her long, and on arriving at Bruce Mines, I noticed on the other side of the wharf a small, rakish schooner, whose captain was a particular friend of my uncle, but which I did not know at the time. The name of this little schooner was the Vallanta. At my first opportunity I went to her captain and asked him if he wanted to hire a cabin boy. With a very gruff voice he asked me why I was leaving my uncle, and said that if I was a dirty cook he did not want me. However, he said, "Get your bag and come aboard at ten o'clock to-night, as we want a boy that does not get seasick." The wind being fair at that time we made canvas on her. I could see by the way she was heading that she was making for Mississauga Straits. I then asked one of the sailors where she was bound for, and he politely told me to mind my own business. In the course of a short time I asked another man, but got a similar answer, so I thought I would ask no more questions, but trust to luck, and see that the meals were cooked nicely, as I had a surly crew to deal with. After we passed through the straits and Outer Duck Islands I was convinced that she was heading for the American shore about Presque Isle lighthouse.

The wind being nice and fresh, about sundown next evening we got well under the American shore. The sailors began to unbatton the hatches, but all at once, to my astonishment, she rounded up in the wind and came about, heading back for the Canadian shore. The trouble was that the American revenue cutter had seen us, and came bearing down on us with full steam. She came so close to us that I would see a puff of smoke from the little cannon they were making use of, but our crew put a cloud of canvas on the schooner, and with a leading breeze she soon outdistanced the cutter, and as they found the cutter was on the lookout, we headed back for Bruce Mines. I never knew until then that the hold was full of whiskey, and that I was on the most notorious smuggler that sailed the seas. Five years in the Sing Sing prison and the confiscation of the schooner would have been the penalty if the revenue cutter had overhauled us.

CHAPTER III.

About this time the mysterious schooner called the Dream, of Detroit, made its appearance. The history of this vessel is the most unique in the annals of mariners. Having sailed on this vessel, I can give its history, which is as follows:—

A shipbuilder living in Cleveland paid a visit to his friends in the city of Detroit, and one night while on a visit he had a dream. He

dreamed that he built a beautiful vessel; that her lines were as fine as any yacht; her sails and rigging in general were as good as the sail-makers and riggers could furnish; that he invited all his friends to make a cruise of all the lakes on this beautiful ship, but that after making the cruise, at a certain place the vessel capsized and all were drowned. He awoke at this part of the dream and slept no more that night. At the breakfast table he told this dream to his friends, which naturally created a great laugh; but the dream left such an impression on his mind that he decided to build that beautiful ship on lines that he saw in his dream.

He therefore went back to Cleveland, laid the keel and built the vessel according to his dream—a veritable floating palace—and he christened her the "Dream of Detroit." He then proceeded to Detroit and got all his friends to come aboard to make a pleasure voyage of the lakes. After cruising to all the ports of Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, and enjoying themselves as people of high life would naturally do, they wound their way to Lake Superior's stormy coast. One day as she was lying at anchor with all sails set, as there was only a light breeze from land, they gave orders to the man left as watchman on deck to look out for puffly weather until they went below for dinner. They had barely seated themselves to dine when a terrible squall struck her square amidships. She forged ahead like a race horse, but as she came up on her anchor, it threw her on her beam ends, when she rolled over like a log and drowned every man aboard, except the watchman, who crawled up on her side after she filled with water, thus saving his life.

In a short time after this unfortunate occurrence, the relatives of the lost ones came and raised the schooner, stripped her of all her sails and gear, towed her to Detroit, and put her up for sale at any price; but as she had become so unfavorably known to the sailors of all the lakes it was difficult to dispose of her.

It was in the following spring that Thomas Maitland, a trader on the upper lakes, bought her for a paltry sum—the ship that cost thousands upon thousands. When Captain Maitland had her properly fitted out he selected a crew from the northern lakes, I being one of them, he shipped aboard of her, and this vessel, which was re-christened the "Restless," sailed the upper lakes for years afterwards. She made barrels of money for her owners, and was considered the fastest sailing vessel of the time, having been originally built for speed. Just a few years ago this phantom ship of Detroit left her bones in Lake Ontario.

CHAPTER IV.

Old sailors will remember the summer in the sixties when the smoke was so dense that you could hardly see the sun, and vessel property of the smaller class could be bought for a song, as there was nothing for them to do. A captain by the name of McCarroll came to the Georgian Bay, and bought the schooner Minnie Mitchell. This small schooner had been idle so long that her top seams in the hull were opened by the sun. But that did not stop that venturesome captain from selecting a crew, to which I belonged as mate, and from bending on the canvas and sailing for the east coast of Lake Huron. After some very narrow escapes from being driven ashore in the dense smoke, we arrived at Kincardine. We were then chartered for Sarnia with a small load of lumber. Shortly before leaving Kincardine, a lady with two children came down to the vessel and asked our captain if she could get passage for Sarnia. He informed her that if she could put up with the rough accommodation the vessel afforded she might come along; whereupon she agreed to be on hand when the vessel was ready for departure.

All being ready, we left Kincardine with the wind from the north and just enough of it to fill the sails. In fact, there was not enough wind that summer to clear the dense smoke from the lakes. After being out a few hours we could hardly see the bowsprit head. It was then that I thought of her topsides being so open, so I decided to try the pumps, which showed clear blue water. I then went into the cabin, raised the trap door in the cabin floor, and found the water six inches from the floor. I had surmised that there was something of that character, as she acted very lorry and would not steer. When the lady saw this amount of water in the vessel she lost her senses and her screams were simply heartrending. The captain took the wheel and the rest of us worked hard at the pumps all night, but still the water gained. Our minds being so intensely on the pumps, we forgot the provisions until it was too late.

At twelve o'clock the following day the water was up to her deck, and she was nothing but a water-logged hulk. We had to lower her canvas to keep her from rolling over. When we came to examine our yawl boat we found that both garboard streaks were split from stem to stern half an inch wide, and no better than a basket. We were now beginning to feel the pangs of hunger, and the little children were crying for something to eat, as they sat on the lumber with coats thrown over them. As a last resort the men and myself put life lines on our waists and dove down into the cabin to the lockers containing the provisions.

After many attempts with marlin spikes, we eventually succeeded in bursting in the one which held the bread. The bread came oozing out and floated on the surface of the water in small particles, which we gathered and fed to the woman, children and ourselves. As the wind was very light from the north the schooner gradually drifted off to the south, for we kept the stay-sail set,—the only sail she would stand.

On the morning of third day, we began to see bottom, and knew we were making the shore fast. A couple of hours later she struck the ground heavily, and was soon piled high and dry by the ground swell in shallow water. Even at that short distance we could not see the shore on account of the dense smoke, but thought we could hear the sound of the small waves breaking on the shore. The small boat not being very serviceable, we made a raft of the lumber, unrove every halyard, every downhaul, and with every line we had aboard, we tied them all together and made one end fast to the raft, after which one of the sailors and I took a pike pole each and gradually poled to the shore, while the captain paid out the line. We had not poled very far when we saw the beach and it was only a short time after that the woman and children were landed safely on shore.

We all started to walk south on the beach, I carrying one child, one of the sailors, the other child; while the captain and another man helped the woman along. In this way we continued for about half an hour when we came upon a French fisherman's home, which was very near the mouth of the Big Sauble a few miles east of Kettle Point, where we obtained something to eat from the Frenchman's scanty fare, which we all enjoyed, and where we left the woman. We each gave the woman what money we could spare from our scanty purse, and told her we would try to communicate with her friends from the first settlement we came to.

As it was twenty miles to the nearest on the old Grand Trunk at that time, we thought it better to walk the shore, over thirty miles, to Sarnia, and after two days' walking we reached Sarnia, more dead than alive. After arriving at Sarnia and having something to eat, we were not long in finding the woman's husband and telling him of the circumstances. He immediately made arrangements to go to her assistance. After procuring ourselves new shoes, as our old ones were completely worn off our feet, leaving our feet sore and bleeding, the crew then separated, all going their own way. I never met one of those men on the lakes afterwards; neither did I hear what became of the old vessel.

CHAPTER V.

In the autumn of that year I joined the schooner *Maple Leaf*, whose captain's name was Richard Hill. This captain lost his life years afterwards by the sinking of the propeller *Simcoe* on Lake Huron. Late in the month of November, 1868, our schooner was chartered to bring a load of corn to Byng Inlet on the north shore of Georgian Bay. This corn was used for the loggers' horses in the lumber woods managed by the Dodge Lumber Company, American millionaires, who had built their mills a short time before. As it was very late in the fall when we arrived and all lake traffic was about shut down, four of us decided to leave that place and make our way through the bush country to Orillia, with the idea of ultimately reaching our respective homes.

At that time it was bush country for hundreds of miles north and east. There was a saw log road leading out from Byng Inlet, which kept along the Magnetawan River for about eighty miles, and we were fortunate in having this road, bad as it was, for part of our journey. About every sixteen or twenty miles on this road was a camp where the loggers lived throughout the winter. As luck would have it, there was a man living at Byng Inlet who had a team of horses and a sleigh, and was anxiously waiting for snow and ice to take them out to the front. By paying him a small amount to carry our baggage and ourselves, agreeing to walk where the roads were bad, we secured the accommodation.

The day before leaving, we were called to one side by two bush rangers, who told us not to attempt that long bush journey without being well armed, as the wolves were more numerous and vicious than they had been for years before. It did not take long for each of us to procure a rifle and the necessary ammunition. The following day we started up the river for the first camp, intending to make a camp each day, and the first day about four o'clock we heard our first wolf howl. It was cold weather, but that long and bloodthirsty howl in the northern wilds appeared to change the atmosphere to freezing. We were now about four miles away from the camp. Proceeding onward, we soon heard another howl, still another, and then howling in all directions. The driver lashed his horses, but the poor beasts could not make much speed, as the roads were in such bad condition. We all prepared ourselves, and thought we were going to be attacked, but, strange to say, in making the other four miles, the wolves kept within close range, but did not attack us.

On reaching the camp, the foreman saw that we received a hearty meal, and that our horses were taken care of. We were informed by the bushmen that the wolves were running deer, but that if they had come across our trail they would have followed us. It was only a few days

before that a driver cut loose his horses from a sawlog sleigh and fled for safety to the camp. We were also warned by the bushmen that if we could reach each camp before four o'clock, the wolves would not molest us, as about that hour they commenced their running. At this first camp we left all unnecessary forage in order to lighten up.

We journeyed from camp to camp with no mishaps until we were making our twenty-mile trip between the last camp, from the mouth of the Magnetawan River, where a pontoon bridge crossed it, and the camp a few hundred yards on the other side of the bridge. This being a longer day's journey than usual, night overtook us when within about three miles of the bridge, and we heard the wolves coming on our trail with that weird, bloodthirsty howl. Just as we reached the bridge they were within one hundred yards of us. We fired at them in the darkness, and we could distinguish their forms and knew there was a very large pack. To make matters worse, the water was running over the pontoon bridge five or six inches deep, but you could see the slide logs bob up and down, which we used as a guide to get across. We were told by the timbermen that if the wolves came up, they would tackle the horses first, and as they were trying to encircle our sleigh, we could see them in myriads. We had our choice to be eaten by wolves or drowned in crossing the bridge; so we chose the latter. The driver lashed his horses and we flew over the bridge on a gallop. After crossing, to our surprise, we ran into a gang of about thirty men, who gave us a mighty cheer of joy for our miraculous escape. The foreman of this gang, a large, brawny Irishman, told us that he had heard the first howl of the wolves when at the supper table, and knew that the wolves were on the road and that it was a man they were chasing. Whereupon, he had ordered every man to shoulder his axe, and run for the river bridge, intending to cross it. But, finding the water so high, and with no means of crossing the swift current, they decided to make their stand close to the bridge and wait for something to turn up.

Our horses were comfortably stabled at once, but the poor animals were so wet and tired that they immediately lay down, refused food, and could barely stand up the next day. We were told by the timbermen of this place, that we had had a very narrow escape, and that it was only the day before that they had taken one poor fellow into their camp who had been chased by a pack of wolves, treed, and kept there until he was severely frozen when rescued by some of the men through the night. I might say here, that our trip from the head waters of the Magnetawan to Bracebridge was a continual battle with wolves, but we were never so closely cornered up as at the time of the chase to the pontoon bridge.

At that early period, the wolves were as thick as flies in the summer time. One peculiarity of the wolves was that they would not attack a large gang of men or several teams of horses, but the individual man or single team of horses stood very little chance if caught out towards evening or in the night. The wolf was the settler's greatest curse in those early days of the sixties. At that time there were only a few houses in Bracebridge, and from there we made our way to Orillia, which ended our memorable bush journey. Here we separated, each of us going to our respective homes. I made my way across the country by stage to my home in Collingwood.

The following spring I shipped as master of a tug towing sawlogs to different sawmills along the shores of Georgian Bay. At a point where some of those sawlogs were rafted, at the mouth of the Nottawasaga River, a large river which empties into Georgian Bay, the waters were dark and murky, or about the color of port wine. Strange as it may seem, these waters were teeming with the largest maskinonge known on any of the lakes. In fact, there was one caught there weighing eighty-two pounds and measuring five feet two inches long.

About that time there was an English sawmill man who came from Michigan, erected a sawmill at the mouth of this river, and after his booms were all strung across the river to keep the logs from moving out into the lake. He had to couple these booms together with small chains about three feet long, a ring in one end of the chain and a tee on the other. They passed the tee of one down through the hole in the other and coupled them together. The great trouble was they could not see the tee in the dark water, so as to catch it, with their pike pole so the mill company decided to paint all these chains white. It was not long after painting the chains white that some of them mysteriously disappeared.

Keeping an eye open for the guilty culprit, five mill men who were out of the mill one evening about five o'clock looking over the pond, noticed one boom fast at one end and adrift at the other. They also noticed the loose end of the boom bobbing up and down in the water. As the current was not very strong, they were at a loss to know the cause of it, so they boarded a small scow and poled over to the boom. To their astonishment, they found a large maskinonge swallowing a boom chain that was dangling down. Conser here solved the mystery of the loss of his boom chains. Those large maskinonge will swallow almost anything they see moving in the water.

It was on this very spot that the celebrated Mud Sturgeon was caught weighing three hundred and ten pounds, and it was just a few miles from this river that the great fox snake was first seen by fishermen living here

at present, with a motor boat. This enormous serpent went through the water at the rate of six miles an hour. It escaped from those fishermen, but as it was seen by numerous other people who happened to be on the different shores, its course can be minutely described until it ran up against a party of duck hunters in the Severn River. When first seen, it followed the Tiny shore, about half a mile from the beach, passed between Tiny Island and the mainland, around Cedar Point, crossed Labbatt's Bay and passed between Giant's Tomb and the mainland, then close to Gin Rock lighthouse. It was seen by people all along that shore. It passed the south end of Bushley Island and made straight for the ship channel at Sturgeon Point. It then made for the rushes up the Severn River. About midway between the mouth of the Severn River and the rushes there were two men hunting ducks. To their astonishment they saw this monster coming up the river with its head about a foot and a half above the water. As they could not exactly tell what it was they moved a little closer to it. When the snake saw them it turned towards them, came closer up to the boat and stretched its neck over it. After the hunters had swallowed their hearts a few times, they managed to take a liner on its head, which blew half of it off. When they saw that they had killed or stunned it, they threw a line over its head, drew it tight, and towed it to Midland. This monster was six inches through, and about eighteen feet long. It was afterwards mounted, and decorated one of the Midland hotels for years until it fell to pieces.

CHAPTER VI.

Becoming tired of sailing, I made my way to the southern and rock-bound shores of Lake Superior and Thunder Bay, where I finally landed at the present site of Port Arthur, then a virgin forest with no trace of civilization save one log shack built by a man named Flaherty, who kept a veritable western hotel for the benefit of trappers, miners, explorers and surveyors of those days. I happened to be one of those favored with being at the opening of this wonderful hotel. That grand opening was spoken of for years afterwards by old timers, on account of the many amusing incidents it afforded. The squaws and Indians came for miles around to attend it. You could cut out the tobacco smoke with a knife in the hall room when the dance was at full swing, and the yells of the half wild Indians in their delight would chill a tenderfoot to the bone.

Having finished my work at this place, I wandered down the north shore of Lake Superior to the Grand St. Ignace Island, which at that time was known to very few white men, and was a long way from civilization. The waters surrounding this island, which were teeming with trout and whitefish, attracted the attention of my friends and myself

and induced us to lay out our small earnings in establishing a fishery. This was in the year 1867, and the old "Algoma" was plying along the northern shore of Lake Superior at that distant date. It was with the captain of this old side-wheeler that we made arrangements to bring our supplies and barrels from the east to ship out our fish.

It happened at one time that the Algoma did not arrive as soon as we expected and we ran out of provisions. I was then detailed to take an Indian boy and a boat to the distant Hudson Bay post at Nipeyon for supplies. As the Algoma had not arrived with our money for the fish sent down, it left us in a precarious state to trade at the Hudson Bay post, as they did a strictly cash business with people outside their own hunters. On arriving at the Hudson Bay post, however, as luck would have it, I found that the Hudson Bay Factor, Count Charles de Larone, was an intimate friend of my father's, so, after making my wants known to this noble Frenchman, I obtained all the flour, pork and tea that was necessary. With a hearty shake of the hand, we left this illustrious man and started on our return journey; but, being very hungry, we did not go very far before we decided to have something to eat.

Not having any cooking utensils of any kind, except a cup used as a bailer for our boat, the cooking of this meal was left to the ingenuity of the Indian boy, and the way he went about this was marvellous to behold. He examined the rocks close by until he found a rock with a depression in it about the size of a wash-basin. He cleansed it thoroughly with water, then put some flour and water into it, and mixed it into a dough. How he was going to bake this dough was soon demonstrated to my great wonder. He cut it into strips about three feet long and as thick as a man's finger, then from a willow bush which grew nearby he cut a few gads about four feet long. Around these gads he wound the dough, commencing at the small end and winding it about half an inch apart down the gad until it was all used up; then, with two heavy stones to hold the gads the proper distance from the fire he proceeded to bake his bread by gradually turning the gads. He next took a nice flat stone, put a few pieces of pork on it, and faced it towards the fire. By repeated turnings he managed to fry the pork; and, being very hungry, we sat down and enjoyed a meal, such as we had not enjoyed for many a day.

After our dainty repast was over, we headed once more for St. Ignace Island, but after being a short distance out, the wind came ahead, and at a close haul with our sails, we made Simpson's Island Passage. This island was the home of my Indian boy, his sister Anessa or White Feather, and his invalid father. The wind being ahead we remained there until

the next day, and I made myself at home. I supplied them with some of my provisions, and I could not keep my eyes from the beautiful Anessa while she was cooking our meal. This beautiful Indian girl with the lithe and slender form, the black, magnetic eyes, was known as the belle of the Ojibway tribe. As I was only a boy, I naturally longed for a view of that dusky face in the days that followed. While I was at work on St. Ignace Island, it was a common occurrence to see the belle of the Old Ojibway tribe rounding the point of the island in her little birch bark canoe and I saw that she never went back empty-handed.

At another time that summer we were put upon short rations by the neglect of the steamboat company, and this time we made a trip to Jackfish Bay, where there was a trader, to see if we could get a supply of provisions from him. This place was at the lower end of the Peipelon Passage. Running along the shores of the island, to the west of us we saw a tent pitched upon the shore, and a few birch bark wigwams near by. There was also a small wharf on the beach, which was used for fishing purposes.

The occupant of this tent proved to be a white trader, who had formerly been an old sailor, whom I had been acquainted with on the lakes. After giving us something to eat and a warm cup of tea from his scanty fare, he confidently told us his troubles. He had built the dock, kept a small fishing station and bought his fish from the Indians living in that neighborhood. We saw the birch bark wigwams, and inquisitively asked him who were living in those tents. He told us that the tents were now empty; that they had been the tents of his squaw fish-cleaners whom he had employed, and that they were of different tribes: one each of Cree, a Chippewa, a Stoney and a Sioux, and two Pies.

It seems that the man who kept the trading post at Jackfish manufactured what the traders called White Line Whiskey or Indian Squawaw Boo. This whiskey is manufactured from the juniper berry, gathered from off the high rocks with a small proportion of high wines, a certain amount of fusiloli, a small quantity of bluestone, some tobacco and water. After boiling, it turns to a watery whiteness. This liquor did not appear to intoxicate those who used it, nor did it make them stagger around like drunken men, but it seemed to set them crazy for the time.

In the absence of the white man of the tent, the latter went on to tell us, the trader from Jackfish had visited his fishing station and sold quantities of whiskey to his squaws. It was not long after they had imbibed too freely until war to the bitter end commenced, and with fish

knives and tomahawks they proceeded to carve each other for as these tribes had been at deadly enmity for centuries, it required only small provocation to cause a fight to the finish. Three of the squaws were soon knocked out, the other three were taken away by their Indian friends, badly hurt, for they never returned. This event was kept quiet for some years afterwards, as no one bothered about it, and, as old frontier men would say, "it was a good riddance of bad rubbish."

A few days after we left, the old sailor packed up his outfit and left the district. The other trader at Jackfish Bay, where we went to get our supplies, a few days after the fight, loaded his boat, taking all his belongings and sailed for the American shore, across Lake Superior. He knew that in selling these Indians whiskey, which was strictly against the laws of the land, he had been responsible for that fight, and if caught he would be severely punished.

On our return to our fishing station, we found that the steamboat had arrived, leaving us a plentiful supply of provisions.

CHAPTER VII.

In the North-west, at Fort Garry, troubles were at this period brewing, which culminated in the Riel rebellion of 1870; and having an adventurous spirit, with other volunteers, I left old Canada for the scene of the rebellion. As my father had some influence with the Government High Commissioner S. J. Dawson, by his recommendation I received a position as master of General Wolseley's boat.

On my arrival at Port Arthur, I assumed charge of this boat, which was about thirty feet long, eight foot beam, Carver build—sharp at both ends—and would carry about fifty barrels of flour and pork with ten or twelve men and their accoutrements.

Everything being now ready for our long and hazardous trip to Fort Garry, we made a start from Port Arthur by going up the Kaministiquia River. The Kaministiquia is a beautiful river with deep water close up to the banks, and in some places it is a quarter of a mile wide. We proceeded up this beautiful stream, passing on our left the Indian mission, which was in charge of the Jesuit Fathers. A few miles farther up, we came to the first rapids, a short distance below the great Kakabeka Falls. It was then that we discovered what our trip was going to be.

Two men were left in each boat, one in the bow and the other in the stern, each having a pike pole. The remaining men had to take to the river bank with a long rope to tow the boat through the rapids. This was kept up until we reached the great falls. As the water was so swift it was impossible to do anything with the oars.

Those Kakabeka Falls are the wonder of the West, having a perpendicular fall of one hundred feet. The legends of stories told about them are wonderful. They tell us that Chief Red Feather, of the Stoney Tribe, in a fit of jealousy, bound his squaw Mirawaba in a birch bark canoe and sent her over the falls. The very old Indians of the present day remember hearing their fathers tell of listening to Mirawaba's screams and wails as she approached that monstrous drop, and on the return of that day each year, the old superstitious Indians fancy they hear the shrieks of Mirawaba as they were heard when she went over the falls.

It was at the foot of those falls that our first hard work began. We commenced it by unloading our boats; then each man had to carry his barrel of flour, his barrel of pork and other necessities over the portage. As before stated, each of those barrels weighed one hundred pounds, but by fastening a pack strap about the centre of the barrel, with the flat part of the strap over the forehead, and two men to help the barrel on the carrier's back, he generally made the portage in some kind of form. Some of the portages were a mile long, some of them more, some less, and it was a common occurrence to see numbers of those men who had never before had a pack strap over their heads, go about a hundred yards, then fall; and they were sometimes badly hurt. They would have to wait until some one came along to help them load on their pack again. It had to be carried through in some shape or form, as the military rule was that every man should portage his own provisions. Quite frequently we met bank and store clerks, who had come from the east with a venturesome spirit, having the blood running down their backs, where the iron hoops on the pork barrels had cut through their woollen shirts, leaving the back all cut and skinned. As the number of portages between Kashabouie and the Great Bear Portage, near Fort Alexander, the last portage on the Winnipeg River, were legion, those bank clerks and store boys were a pitiful sight to see.

Going back to our first portage, after the men had carried all their provisions, sails and other equipments over, we started to pull our boats over the portage. To make this more convenient, we bored a hole through the bow of the boat, near the fore foot, then took our river tow line, drove it through the hole and up over the seat. I might say here that we had to rebuild the whole portage in order to get our heavy boats over. So we took our axes, went into the bush, cut poles about twelve feet long and six inches through and laid them two feet apart across the full length of that portage. I might also say that these Hudson Bay portages were only intended for portaging birch bark canoes, carried on the shoulders of four men, while the contents of the canoes were taken over with pack strap over the head. To portage one of our large boats

over that portage took the crews of two boats, having six men on each side to hold her on her keel, and the men on the line ahead. By one crew helping the other, we managed to get all of our boats over. This same process of transportation was adhered to throughout the whole expedition. The men took their turns at cooking, and we often had some very unsavory meals, but as we generally depended on hard tack and pork, we managed to get along fairly well.

After loading our boats again, we proceeded through Shebandowan Lake, and on our way we stopped at a place called the Dam-Site, over night. A peculiar thing happened at that place, which might have caused a loss of life, but luckily did not turn out so badly as might have been expected. The wild at this place was literally alive with wild pigeons, and as one of our prominent officers found himself in a sporting mood and happened to have a shot gun in his possession, he thought he would shoot some of the pigeons that were flying through the camp fire and close around; but in discharging both barrels of that gun, he did not notice myself and two or three Caughnawaughs Indians, who were sitting under a tree not far off, and as there were no pigeons killed, we received the full charge of both barrels in our breasts and legs. About twenty shot punctured one Indiana's breast, but did little harm, except drawing blood. I received a few shot below the knees, but they did little harm, as the shot was well spent before reaching us. It is safe to say that the officer did no more shooting with a shot gun, after the calling down he gave ear to from the colonel. As this officer is still alive and well to-day, if he chances to peruse these lines, they may bring back to him old memories of that expedition.

We left this place next morning passing through Shebandowan Lake, and arrived at the Height of Land Portage. The entrance to this portage in those days was nothing but bull rushes and mud, and the landings were only intended for canoes. Our heavy boats drawing two feet of water, could only get within one hundred yards of the shore, so we simply had to unload our boats right there. Each man jumped out into mud and slime to the waist, then lashed his barrel on his back, and tried to make for the shore. With the weight of his barrel, he would sink into that mud fully ten inches, with the water up to his arm-pits. By falling and floundering he very often lost his barrel, but generally managed to reach shore by pulling the barrel after him with his pack strap. After taking all of our pork out of the boats, we were enabled to pull them very close to the shore, and by this means we managed to keep our perishable provisions dry while unloading.

Strange to relate, this portage was infested with a very peculiar horse leech. It was about six inches long, and of a brownish color, with brown spots. As the men had their pants rolled up, the leeches would fasten unto their legs, and in crossing this portage it was common to see men stop to brush off several of these loathsome-looking objects, which they did expeditiously. Those who were bitten by the leeches did

It was on this portage that we met Chief Blacktope and his tribe of Cree and Chippewa Indians, who tried to raise a disturbance because we were passing through his country; but a few barrels of pork and flour satisfied him. However, as he was considered a mischief-maker, he was closely watched by our scouts.

After crossing the Height of Land, Portage, all subsequent portages were conducted on much the same principle. Loading our boats, we proceeded through small lakes, rivers and along small portages, until we reached the French portage. Nothing eventful happened until we came to the French Creek. Here and there it was partially filled with logs, which a canoe could go over or around, but our heavy boats would do neither; so with twenty men on the bank, and by means of a long rope, we cleared the obstruction away. As we were in the vanguard and our crew all fine, heavy men, it appeared that we had nearly all the dirty work to do, and the men deserved credit for the way they horsed those logs out of the way up onto the bank clear of the boats. We now passed on through numerous small lakes and portages without anything more than ordinary taking place, until we reached Rainy Lake, where we encamped on the first large island we came to for the day, as the wind was ahead and blowing hard.

On this island at that time was a band of Sioux Indians, who came from Red Lake Falls, Minnesota, and were a vicious looking band of about one hundred and fifty all told. They were dressed for some purposes, and were a very peculiar looking lot of men. They had a ring in his nose and two in each ear. The scalp lock of this tribe was very prominent, and their hair hung about three feet down. Their hair was in two plaits, which were tied at the ends with wampum. While running through the bush in their constant quarrelling and fighting amongst themselves and with neighboring tribes, the rings were very often pulled out of their ears, which then looked more like fish gills than ears of human beings.

A little incident which I am about to relate will show you the remarkable memory of these Indians in recognizing white men's faces. The night we arrived at this island, our scouts ran across one of the Indians wearing a pair of government boots, and by aid of an interpreter, who

understood their language, they found that one of the volunteers had traded the boots to the Indian for a wampum belt and an old stone pipe. They very promptly took the boots away from the Indian and reported the case to the colonel, who held an investigation; whereupon he called upon the Red Man to recognize the man who traded him the boots. So the bugle was sounded, "Fall in." Company after company was formed into long lines; then the Indian was ordered to start at the top of the column, going up one line and down the next, until he spotted his man. As their uniforms were all the same, and all the men were close shaven, it was a difficult task for the Indian to perform. There were parties there who knew the guilty volunteer, and with anxious eye they watched the search. After he had passed down line after line, he came to a halt, placed his hand on one of the men's shoulder, and pointed his finger at him. This volunteer was immediately taken from the ranks and brought before the colonel. The colonel paused for some time, then addressing the volunteer (a Collingwood boy, now deceased), said: "Private, though we know those boots are old and worthless, tell me, did that Indian guess you truly?" The volunteer replied, saying: "Yes, colonel, I am guilty of the crime." This trial was conducted more for the purpose of testing the Indian's memory for white men's faces than to meet out the punishment for the said offence.

As the weather was fine, next morning we made a start for Fort Frances, and now we had our first experience with our boats in a race under sail. These boats had two lug sails. One forward and one aft were hoisted by a halyard about twelve feet hoist, fastened at the foot by a tack or lanyard through a ring bolt through the seat, and by being properly sheeted and set up by the throat halyards, the boats would lie nice and close to the wind. It was a sorry sight to see that day, men who were voyageurs of those boats making such a mess of things when they came to go under sail. There were only two or three men amongst that vast number who understood sails, and to them the race belonged. I might say that the boat I had command of had a foot more hoist in her canvas than any of my rivals in the race. I took my halyard out of the ring bolt where they were supposed to be made fast, led it to the weather rail, which acted as a shroud to support the slender spar, and being well ballasted she plied that lake covered with white caps as steady and as stiff as a church. Some of the boats that day took shelter under some of the small islands. Most of us, however, reached Fort Francis, I leading the way and the sheltered ones coming soon afterward. As this was the half-way station from our destination, we were supposed to stay here a few days and clean up and repair our boats. All those boats

long and exhaustive speeches bearing on their loyalty to Great Britain's queen. It was then that the Head Chief of the Indian Council, ordered the now roasted white dog to be served to the officers and high officials who attended this grand pot latch.

Slipping the carcass of the dog off the fire, they took a large knife, cut the meat into thin slices and stuck them on large cedar splints about half an inch thick and eighteen inches long. These were now ready to be passed around by a few of the sap chiefs to the officers and higher officials who were in attendance. There were about fifty aged chiefs of different tribes sitting squatted on the ground watching the proceedings and it was amusing to watch the faces of these old Indians intently watching the white men tasting the white dog, for they knew it was a repulsive morsel for the white men to take. When the meat came to our noble leader, he looked upon it with a certain degree of disgust, but when the High Commissioner, who was sitting beside him, nudged him, hinting to him not to hesitate, he swallowed his dose, greatly to the amusement of the Indians present.

After this repast was over, the great pipe of peace was passed around. The bowl of this pipe was of stone, about three inches long, while the stem was jet, about two feet long, an inch wide, with notches on each side. The pipe was filled with Kinkin'et, made from dried willow bark crumbled up and resembling very much our cut tobacco. The pipe was lighted by the head chief, who passed it around to the next man, and it went from one to another until it had passed around the board, each having taken a couple of puffs. This performance, which was confined to the principal Indians and white men, brought to a close the grand council of peace. We loaded our boats next day to continue our yet long voyage to Fort Garry. With a farewell wave of our hands, especially of mine to that comely Indian girl, who, I believe, was watching our boat, and who responded simultaneously with me, we were off, floating down the beautiful Rainy River, with its fertile land on either shore until we came to its mouth, the entrance to Lake of the Woods.

On the sandy beach at the mouth of the river, we saw a monster Indian walling back and forth. Strange to say, he had no clothing on except a soldier's red coat with the brass buttons buttoned right up to the chin. The coat was a little short for him, not reaching the hips, and his arms protruded six inches through the sleeves. As he paraded the whole brigade, we all quit rowing and yelled with laughter. Two of our men were then ordered to go ashore and find out the brigade or number to which this coat belonged, but finding it in a very filthy condition, they decided to let the Indian wear it in his glory. The coat had belonged

to one our scouting parties, who had cooked their dinner there and had gone off and forgotten it.

On entering Lake of the Woods, we found the most peculiar body of water in the world. It was as green as grass, and if you dipped some into your hands you could scarcely see the hands on account of the dense color. Still the inhabitants use it for drinking purposes and find no bad effects.

After traversing the whole length of Lake of the Woods, we arrived at Rat Portage, at that time a very small Hudson Bay Post, but now the thriving town of Kenora. The night of our arrival was clear and moonlight, and tempted some of our men to try a foraging expedition to try to bag some fine vegetables they had passed on their way. They took a boat and went back to the islands where they had seen vegetables growing close to the water's edge. Rowing around to the back of the island to a place which they thought to be a secluded spot, they landed, and proceeded in a crouching attitude, along the shore, until they came to the gardens. Then filling their haversacks with onions and other unripe vegetables, they worked their way back to the boat, but to their surprise found both oars and sails missing. After considerable swearing and searching around through the neighboring bushes, two Hudson Bay half-breeds came strolling along and gave them to understand, in very good English, that if they would bring back all the vegetables they had stolen from their gardens they would get their oars and sails back; which they did in double quick time.

Next morning we started on our long trip down the Winnipeg River, passing through the worst piece of country we had yet seen on our expedition. The river was nothing but continual rapids and falls, which necessitated many short portages. There was a place on this river called the Grand Discharge, which had baffled the prowess of the Caughnawaghuah Indians of the St. Lawrence River fame, but were shot by Hudson Bay men with safety. Strange to say, if a tree was thrown in at the top of the discharge and passed clear of the rapids below, it would be broken into kindling wood, so great was the power of the discharge. It was at this portage that a man by the name of Butcher, who was on the brigade, carelessly threw his haversack on the rocks. In this haversack was a pin cartridge revolver, which discharged when it fell on the rock, flew back and penetrated the man's body. The army surgeon worked on him, extracted the bullet and, according to last accounts, he lived to get well.

After running a few more rapids, and portaging a few times more, we arrived at Great Bear Portage. This portage was a terror to Hud-

son Bay men, and proved to be likewise to us. It was a mile long, and was a very bad, rocky road, but as our pork barrels and other provisions were getting light and short, we did not feel it as much as expected. It was at this portage that a Hudson Bay packer, who was a Scotch half-breed, showed what he could do with a pack strap over his head. These men were packing bales of furs over the portage, each bale weighing from one hundred to one hundred and fifty pounds. Any one of their men would carry such a bundle of furs over the Great Bear Portage without stopping. We had a small brass field-piece weighing about one hundred and twenty-five pounds, which two of our soldiers would carry over a portage strapped to a pole. The way our soldiers worked to get this pole on their shoulders caused a great amount of merriment to the Hudson Bay men, with comparative ease and without adjusted his pack strap over his head and after the Scotch half-breed had non on top of his furs and he wouldd. he told our men to put the cannon started off and crossed the portage carry it for them. This done, he stopping, to the amazement of the soldiers he met on the way.

At noon we left Great Bear Portage for Fort Alexander, which we reached the same evening. This fort is one of the Hudson Bay Company's oldest posts, and it was at this place that Governor Simpson lay sick so long sixty years ago. Here we replenished our stock with a good supply of Hudson Bay pig-tail tobacco, which we greatly relished, as we had all entirely run out of that luxury. The wind being calm next morning we proceeded on our voyage to the mouth of the Red River, having on our way a very exciting boat race under sail. We landed at Elk Island for dinner, then sailed on for the mouth of the river, which we reached that night about twelve o'clock.

As the night was very dark and as the banks of the river were very low, we experienced great trouble in finding the mouth, which lay in shallow water and kept us grounding on the bottom for quite a distance out. We finally managed to get safely in the river, then landed and pitched our tents. The soil here was very boggy, and it was difficult to make a tent pole or peg stick to the ground. Just as the tents were about all pitched, some one reported that this was a very bad place for venomous reptiles, which caused the men to get very uneasy, so they took the usual precautions which a man takes in a snake country, to guard against their attacks, sprinkling a little salt and spitting tobacco juice around the outside of the tent. At one of the tents, the men retired early, being very tired after the long day's voyage, and not landing until about two o'clock in the morning. Just as they were dozing off into slumber, some one gave an unearthly yell to make believe a snake

was in the tent. The poor, tired soldiers awoke with a start; some ran against the canvas; others to different places; while a few tried to climb the tent pole. But their weight pushed the pole through the sod, and it was soon out of sight in the mud below. Then the tent came down about their ears, and in their hurry to get out of harm's way, as they thought, they simply tore that tent into ribbons.

CHAPTER X.

The following morning we started up the river for the Stone Fort, as it was called at that time, and which was situated about twenty miles from Fort Garry. As we were now getting near the danger point, we all kept a sharp lookout for the enemy, but we were not molested, and had our dinner in the Stone Fort. As we intended to make an early start for Fort Garry next morning, in order to reach that place in daylight, we encamped early. Next morning about four o'clock, we commenced to make what we supposed to be our march on the enemy, and after a hard pull we reached a bend in the river, about two miles from the fort, which was in clear view over the prairie land. The bugle sounded to fall in line, and with eager step every man was in the ranks. With the fort looming up clear in the distance, and rows of cannon lining the tower, it looked a formidable stronghold. Receiving the command, "Forward march," the brigade marched on to the fort, but as we drew near we could not see a man. We were now at the outer gates facing the river, and on entering we found no enemy except a few old half-breeds, who looked very meek indeed.

On being questioned, they told us that Riel had lingered at the fort until he saw the soldiers marching on the plain. He had then, with Levine, Dumont and a few others of that ilk, cut the ropes of the pontoon bridge on the Fort Gary side of the river, letting the bridge swing to the other side of the river, and as there was no other bridge for the soldiers to cross over, the officers in charge made no serious endeavor to catch him, and he was allowed to get away. It was reported that Bishop Tache, of the St. Boniface Mission, which was just across the river from the fort, had given him shelter for some time, while others said he and his crew had taken horses and had made for St. Paul over the prairie.

Scott had been shot for some time before we arrived, but his murder was not forgotten by the soldiers, who kept a suspicious eye on every half-breed with whom they came in contact. One of these half-breeds who talked too loudly was chased into the river and was reported to have drowned. Using a little flattery respecting their loyalty to the

Queen, we managed to pick a little information out of them, one of them showing us the exact spot where Scott was shot. They had led him through a small door on the east side of the fort, and six paces from that door was the place where Scott had fallen by the rifles of that cowardly band of half-breeds. We were given to understand by a friendly half-breed that Scott had not been instantly killed by the rifles and that he had been led back into the tower, where he suffered and groaned until towards morning, when some half breed, hearing his groans, put him out of misery.

Taking a little time to look around, we found the inside of this fort completely lined with cannon—large brass cannon, eight or ten of them mounted on carriages measuring five or six feet in length; large mortars for firing the largest shells; and piles of cannister and grape shot and ammunition of all kinds piled from two to three feet high all around the walls. They had been all ready, so far as ammunition went, to put up a good stiff fight, and would have done so, if their pluck had not failed them. It was the dream of Riel, Dupont, Lepine and a score of others of that stripe to form a government with Riel at its head, which meant rebellion against the Crown, so one of the first moves was to seize this well fortified fort from the Hudson Bay Company; but on seeing the soldiers arriving from the East, the dream of such a government passed away, and they had taken to their legs for safety.

Nothing of importance happened during Colonel Wolseley's long task of restoring confidence towards the Crown, and after confidence was restored, the buffalo hunters of the plains began to come in with their pelts. Those men were descendants of Alexander Selkirk, and no finer specimens of manhood could be seen. I have seen twenty of these men standing in a group, not one of whom was under six feet one inch in height. It was no wonder that the Hudson Bay Company thought a thousand miles was nothing, having such powerful men as they to do their work. They were a very peculiar people, not knowing a word of English, but they spoke the language of the Red Lake Sioux Indians and the Gaelic fluently, and about every man played the Highland bagpipes. It was simply enchanting to hear the melodies of their old Scotch airs floating over the prairie in the still night, and it was no wonder that their forefathers were proud to march to the scurl of their Highland music.

One night as I was strolling around, I chanced to hear one of those pipers playing one of his best selections, so I walked into his camp. He was playing the famous reel of Tulloch. As I was a noted dancer, having taken a number of prizes for dancing that reel in the East, I boldly jumped out on the sod before that gang of wild men, whom I simply electrified by dancing that Highland reel. The cheers of those men could be

heard for miles over the plain, and when they were informed that I was Scotch, they renewed their cheers with increased vigor. The poor fellows of that wild and woolly west were beside themselves with joy. I might say that not a few of my soldier comrades had followed me to this camp and had witnessed this dancing test, and the event was soon circulated to the Colonel and all down the lines. I might also say that I was the fair haired boy amongst those Scotch half breed buffalo hunters until their departure to their western homes.

CHAPTER XI.

About a week after this occurrence, we ran across a man by the name of Jabez Boynton, who was a typical western plainsman, and whose home was at Moore Head in the State of Minnesota, close to the great Sioux Indian reservation at Red Lake. These Indians were considered the most bloodthirsty Indians of the West in those days, but they were all deadly afraid of old Jabez and gave him a wide berth. It was this tribe of Indians who, in June of that year, overhauled a squad of men bound for Fort Garry from St. Paul and stripped them of all their clothes, except their underclothes and socks, then allowed them to proceed on their way to Fort Garry.

This man Boynton was the owner of twelve ox-carts commonly called prairie schooners. These carts had each two solid maple wooden wheels brought hundreds of miles to fit them out. The wheels had to be very wide to keep them from sinking in the red clay of the prairie when loaded. Each cart had a canvas covering to protect goods and driver from the rain, and it was pulled by a very large ox of a long horn species hitched into a pair of shafts which were run through and keyed to the yoke on his neck. The average load for one of these was about half a ton of supplies for the different trading posts of the north, which he supplied. Each cart had a driver, whose position did not amount to much, as each ox was tied to the tail end of the cart before him, and all went along in a string.

It took Boynton about twelve days to make his trip from Moore Head to Fort Garry and on his arrival at Fort Garry with his caravan, his men, seeing the bustling stir at the Fort, quit his employ for better jobs they expected to get there. Naturally looking around for new drivers, and coming across about ten of us sailors sitting in a bunch on the grass, made us an offer. All of us voyageurs or sailors, not knowing a mule from an ox, but feeling restless for a change, accepted his offer of thirty dollars each for the round trip.

When all was ready, Boynton took good care that he hitched all

these oxen himself, and gave us strict orders to keep back of the ox when driving, as the *anima'* nightstop. They went all right the first day out until nightfall, when it was time to encamp. Each man was given a large stake and sledge hammer and told to drive the stake into the ground before unhitching the oxen. When unhitching time came, we were all told to crawl under the carts. Some of the drivers did so, and some did not, thinking they knew a thing or two about oxen. Before unhitching the leading ox, Boynton got his bull ring with a long rope attached, put the ring in the nose of the ox, and proceeded to unhitch. When freed from the cart, the ox happened to turn his head and caught sight of one of the drivers who knew oxen so well. He made a roar that you could hear as far back as the fort, then charged, dragging Boynton after him, but missed his man, who barely escaped under the cart. He then unhitched, one at a time, and tied them to the pegs, so that they might graze on the prairie grass that grew in abundance on the roadside. It was not until they were all watered from the tank that those vicious brutes stopped bellowing, and we did not know until we reached Moore Head that no one except Boynton could drive them. The men were called drivers, but were merely used to help the carts along through the bad roads in times of need and for loading and unloading the freight. Boynton seemed to have a charm over those vicious animals that no other man possessed.

We noticed before leaving Fort Garry that Boynton had supplied each man with three pig-tail twists of Hudson Bay tobacco, with instructions to put one twist in each boot and the third in a pocket, with a piece cut off, indicating that it had been used, so that when crossing the reservation of Sioux Indians, which would take two days, when we met an Indian on the way, we might cut a small piece off for ourselves and give the balance to the Indian. This, according to Indian tradition, is a sure sign of friendship, and has saved the lives of many white men in days gone by. By the time we had used the last plug from our boots, we had crossed the Indian reservation.

In due course of time we arrived at Moore Head, and stayed there for a time to repair our carts and exchange some of the oxen, which had played out on the road. At Moore Head, in these days, there were only a few houses, a trading post and a hotel. Strange to say, this hotel was prohibited from selling whiskey, and as some of our drivers had always been used to a little liquor, they worked all kinds of schemes with the proprietor to get him to sell them some. A scheme that finally worked with the proprietor was that they were to give him ten cents for being weighed on his scales and he would throw the whiskey in as a

present. It frequently happened that some of the men were weighed several times a day.

After a short stay, we loaded up our carts for the return trip to Garry. Each cart carried about two hundred weight of pork in brine, sacks of flour and other little groceries, which would total up to about half a ton for each cart. We greased carts, with half a pail of soft soap which was conveniently hanging underneath the cart for that purpose, then started on our trip to the north. As we had three fresh oxen, we determined to get on friendly terms with them, so the first day out one of the men who had prepared himself by procuring a gimlet, tapped the pork barrels that he might drain off the salty brine. This he used to saturate a whisk of grass, which he fed to the oxen. This performance had to take place when old Jabes' back was turned. As the oxen were extremely fond of it we were not long in becoming on the most loving terms with them, and they would follow the men anywhere. The brine made the poor beasts so thirsty that it was not long until they had all the water in the tank used up, and we had to travel a day and a half out of our way down in the Indian reservation to replenish our water supply.

When those long horn oxen are thirsty, they will bellow louder than a mule, and old Jabes would frequently say that he had never seen such goll darned oxen to drink water; that as long as he had travelled the plains he had never had cattle that could drink water with those three and that he had never seen long horns take up with strangers the way they did. "If you are not careful," he said, "they will kiss you." He did not tumble until, when unloading the carts at Garry, he found the barrels pretty light. After unloading the carts, old Jabes paid us our thirty dollars each and we all bade the old man farewell.

We employed our time in cleaning up and procuring ourselves new shirts, which we badly needed, then joined our boats for the return trip to the far East. We gathered together all our little souvenirs, such as buffalo skin coats, flint lock rifles, and many other articles and put them safely in our boats. The rainy season had now set in and the blankets which we used for sleeping in, and which we had left in the boats, were soaking wet. After we had got fairly under way, we found the water in the rivers very low and the portages all broken up because of the thousands of men who had passed over them during the summer. As only the voyageurs, the Caughnawaghua Indians and the Sixtieth Rifles were returning, most of the soldiers having remained at Fort Garry, we found when we came to repair those portages that we were quite short-handed. We had a continuous pull against a strong current,

and portages which were simply appalling from the Great Bear Portage to the Height of Land Portage, which was hundreds of miles.

From the continual pulling I found at Silver Falls, one of the portages, that the seat of my pants was gone, but as I was an old sailor and always carried a palm and needle, I proceeded to make them good again. There was not a particle of cloth, not even a salt bag, to be got; so as a substitute I procured a strong piece of birch bark and put a very good seat in my pants. When Colonel Welseley and Captain Buller saw the patch, they roared with laughter, Captain Buller remarking that he would give a hundred pounds to see me walking up Piccadilly in London City and be about one hundred yards behind.

Before we got to Rat Portage, the weather turned very cold, and with the scanty clothing with which we were provided, it made our suffering intense. All the way from Great Bear Portage to Rat Portage, the full length of the Winnipeg River, the portages were literally strewn with decayed flour, pork and beans, that had been left to rot, and in the roads joining these portages you could count broken boats without number, which had tried to run the rapids, but had struck on the rocks, had gone to pieces and had left their load of pork and flour scattered along the river banks or in the river.

Except that we suffered from the cold and from the effects of the long expedition, the trip to Shebandowan Lake was uneventful. Here, at the end of Dawson Road on the lake, we pulled the boats up on the beach and left them. Then each man took his belongings in a little linen bag to commence his march of over twenty miles through mud a foot deep to Port Arthur. It took us two days to walk that twenty miles, and I venture to say that there was not a man who was not blistered from his heels to his toes, and whose boots were not worn off his feet. Our arrival at Port Arthur was in the closing days of November, and I am safe in saying that the few men who are now in the land of the living, and who made that return trip from Fort Garry have never forgotten it. After a thorough cleaning, we visited the Government Office, and received our pay, then embarked on the steamer *Chiron* for our homes in the East.

CHAPTER XII.

After sailing on different steamers till 1879, my father, brother and I went to Buffalo and purchased the powerful tug *George Mathan* and brought her to Georgian Bay for wrecking, towing and rafting purposes. This proved to be a profitable investment, but as the tug was a heavy coal burner, and not fitted up for burning staves or wood, as were the tugs used on Georgian Bay at that time, we had to keep a constant

watch to keep her from burning up from the sparks from her stacks.

In September of that year there was a large vessel lying by the dock at Collingwood, which signalled for a tug to tow her up the lake. We acknowledged her signal, put our yawl boat upon our cabin, so as to be out of the way of the tow line, took her line and started northwards up the lake. In the hold of our tug, we had stored about ten cords of fat Norway pine slabs, and after we had made a run of about ten miles up the lake, the captain detected the smell of smoke from the hold. Before the hose could be connected, she was a seething mass of flames, which enveloped the whole tug. The flames spread with such rapidity that every man was chased off deck into the water, clinging to the edge of the tug, while the scoundrel on the vessel we had in tow, cut the line, and sailed complacently away, leaving us to our fate, which proved the old adage of "Man's humanity to man," for he well knew our tug was burned, and that there was no way of saving our lives. His boat, after sailing about half a mile, became becalmed, but he did not even lower a boat.

We fought the flames as best we could until she was burned to the water's edge. One poor boy who had managed to get hold of a piece of hatchway about two feet square, jumped clear of the tug and paddled himself away about fifty feet from the terrible heat. With the hair burned off our heads, our cheeks burned to blisters, our clothes burned off our backs, and the tug burned within six inches of the water; when the water lapping over its sides was raising hot steam—it was then that we noticed the boy was missing from his little board and gone done in sixty fathoms of water. As all hope was gone, we cast a farewell glance over the mighty deep towards shore which was about nine miles away. At this moment, the dying spark of hope was rekindled by the sight of a boat coming towards us surrounded by a heavy pall of white smoke and a mass of white foam.

This boat proved to be the government tug *Trudeau*, with Capt. Germain as master. He had seen the smoke and steam of our burning tug from the dumping ground off Menford, eight miles away. He knew that a fire in that direction meant a burning boat, and hastened to our rescue. He reached us just in time to save our lives, for we were ready to let go any minute, as between fighting fire, scalds, blisters and hunger, it would have been a relief to seek beyond this wicked world a lasting resting place. We were saved, however, taken to our homes, broken in spirits and funds, to recover from the burns and loss we had sustained.

CHAPTER XIII.

One day after recovering, when my brother and I were sitting in my house talking of the purchase of something in the steamboat line, I heard a knock at the door. I hastened to the door to receive my caller, and was confronted by a very large, well dressed, gentlemanly Ojibway Indian. He was dressed in a black broadcloth suit of clothes, with a very heavy gold watch and chain, and a large gold signet ring on his finger. He said his name was Abraham Esau, and that he was the eldest son of the great chief of the Ojibways on Christian Island.

He gave us to understand that his father had just died, and had revealed to him some Indian secrets which the Indian had kept close from the white man since the time of the massacre of the Jesuit Father Brebeuf and his followers some time in the year 1690. He also informed us that he was not a superstitious Indian as were his people, and that his father had revealed to him where all the treasure of the Jesuit Father was buried on Bushley Island. He told us that he had come across the lake especially to see us, as he knew we would not hesitate about digging up the treasure if we were shown the place.

My brother and I, thinking there might be something in this story, entered into a very secret agreement with the Indian about the division of the booty. He then made us understand that the trip through the Indian country would need to be made secretly. It seems that if the Indians of the Christian Island reservation were to find him implicated in an affair of this kind, which was strictly contrary to the customs of their race, they would seek revenge in some way for his backsliding. However, the agreement with the Indian chief was that we were to procure a large fishing smack and put aboard two weeks' provisions for three men, with picks, shovels and a couple of rifles.

When my brother and I had everything aboard as we agreed, we sailed away from Collingwood with a fair breeze for the Christian Islands. We agreed with the Indian, who had gone before us, to be at the Indian village at exactly twelve o'clock at night, and we arrived on time at a small clump of bushes near the old Jesuit fort, the place where he had previously told us to land. As we ran the bottom of the boat up on the shore, we could see no sign of any person, but it was not long before the Indian made his appearance. With a quiet greeting, he shoved the boat off the beach and jumped in.

As the wind was from the west, we had a fair wind for our destination, and about ten o'clock the next morning we were passing through Winnicog Passing bearing towards Bushley Island. About noon we reached the ground of the great Jesuit massacre. After the Indian had taken

his bearings from the old tumbled down and decayed structures, he drove a stake in the ground and we immediately got to work, but when we looked around, to our surprise, we saw that the whole country, as far as we could see, was dug up with pit holes, some of them twenty feet deep, which had been done apparently by other prospectors looking for the treasure. After digging for three or four days, hole after hole, from eight to ten feet deep, without finding any sign of the booty, we came to the conclusion that the Indian did not know any more about where the treasure was than we did.

We began to suspect that he was trying to play a game on us, but he had worked so hard through the whole ordeal that we forgave him to a certain extent. Jumping out of the last hole I was digging, "Now," I said, in disgust, "get into this boat, Mr. Nichie, for I know you have been telling us lies." With some trepidity he did as ordered, and it was amusing and interesting to some extent to hear the stories he would tell when we were sitting around the camp fire at night. These stories had been handed down from father to son; it was not the Chippewas who had committed that outrage, but that it was the Hurons and Iroquois; that the reason those two great tribes had disappeared from that region was that they had been driven to the far West by the revengeful followers of BreBeauf.

Next morning after quitting our prospecting, we left for our home, two very disappointed prospectors and a very crestfallen Indian. On our way back, we passed very close to Beckwith Island, which, according to Indian belief, is full of evil spirits. The Indians will not land on that island under any consideration. The wind being southwest, we had a very close haul to clear this island, and as we drew near, we noticed the Indian becoming very much excited, looking as if he could not stand it very much longer. He said to us, "Water near the island is very bad; run on rocks." He was not aware that I had known those waters from boyhood; that I had let go the anchor scores of times under its lee, had gone ashore and trampled all over it. I could see by his actions that all the Indian superstition was oozing right out of him, in spite of all his bravado.

I informed him that I was going to land him on the island, and that he could go down to the point and hoist a red handkerchief so that his fellows on the Christian Islands could see it and come to take him home. All he could say was, "Don't, don't." He clasped his hands so tight together that we could see the prints of his nails in the flesh. He turned pale, and the look in his face was simply appalling. Seeing the state he was in, when he told us he wanted us to land him on Cedar Point or

any other place rather than go amongst the evil spirits, finding the wind fair, we landed him on his own Christian Island on a bushy piece of land a mile and a half north of the Indian village.

Leaving the Indian, as it was getting pretty well along in the evening, we headed the boats for the Christian Island lighthouse. Coming abreast of the light, house about dark, with a fresh breeze blowing from the west, we noticed the scud running very fast from that direction with a heavy ground swell setting in, and indications of a bad night. Both of us having been brought up from childhood on the water, knew that there was a stronger wind coming back of that swell than we had so far seen, but knowing every inch of the coast of that bay, we decided to make the run across to Nottawasaga lighthouse, for we were completely sick of the trip and anxious to get back home. After running a couple of miles farther on, it became intensely dark, but we could see the light flash at Nottawasaga harbor, eighteen miles ahead over the black water.

We went to work and double-reefed both sails in short order, then heard a roar like a railroad train crossing an iron bridge, and knew there was a tremendous squall coming from the west. I made a spring for the mainsail, took out the sprit and lowered the mainsail, then made a run for the foresail in order to lower it down, but had barely taken out the sprit when the squall struck us with such force that it split the sheboard and bow down within a foot of the water. To meet this emergency, we trimmed our ballast well aft so as to keep the shattered end out of the water, then shoved an old coat in the opening and put her before the wind.

We had now been sailing about an hour in the face of that gale, heaving out water with a bucket for our lives, when the night became so intensely dark and thick that we could not see a hundred yards ahead of us. This boat had a forward sailing thalt in her about six feet from the bow, to be used in case of emergency. We made an effort to lift the mainmast out and put in this thalt, which we succeeded in doing after a vicious struggle. We knew that, the way the boat was running, it would only be about a couple of hours before she would strike the rough sand of the Nottawasaga River, which has been the death of many a fisherman. We also knew that we must carry a small piece of sail when she got into the combers of the shallow water to keep her from broaching to, for if she did broach to, she would surely roller over and drown us both. As we sailed on we could hear the roar of the breakers on the shore, but did not know for what place on shore she was heading. However, we did know that any part of that shore was extremely dangerous to land even in moderate weather and in daylight. The roar of the breakers on

the shore now became almost deafening. We slacked up the sheet as far as far as possible, shook hands with each other, then felt the ground swell. The boat would make a mad race like a railroad train, then stop. The next long shot she made, she struck the bottom lightly, and about this time we could see the trees on shore, about one hundred yards ahead.

It was now that a big comber came rolling back of us right over the stern, but the old boat gradually raised herself with this comber until she got right on top of it when, with a roar like an avalanche, that monstrous wave carried the boat within twenty feet of the beach, landing her upon two large stones, which came clean through her bottom. We jumped for our lives, grabbing each other's hands, and made for the shore with another comber after us. I might say that we reached the shore in safety, but had a very close call and were chilled through and numb with the cold. The next comber caught the boat and smashed her into kindling wood, which cost us everything we had aboard of her.

We sat on the beach, cold, wet and hungry, but thankful for our lives and thinking of that lying Indian, who, had he been near us at that time, would not have fared very well. There we sat until break of day; then, looking around, we found we had landed on the most dangerous point east of Nottawasaga River, a rockbound coast about twenty miles from home. We also found that kind Providence had guided us between two very dangerous shoals that were quite a distance out in the lake and that would have been sure death if we had struck one of them. Before leaving for home, looking at the breakers, some of them ten feet high and running fifty feet on the beach, we wondered how that o'd boat had ever lived to reach the shore, as Georgian Bay in the fall of the year is a thing all mariners dread.

Now commenced our long walk of twenty miles around the shore to our home in Collingwood, both of us hungry, wet and tired. Such was the ending of the expedition in search of the hidden wealth of the Jesuit Father.

THE END.

